

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8929

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY LOME

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AMEMBASSY LONDON

USUN NEW YORK 675

C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 5104

LONDON FOR SEITZ

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS PGOV GH

SUBJ: PROFESSIONALS' STRIKE DRAWS LIMITED PARTICIPATION

BUT DISSATISFACTION OF GHANAIAAN PUBLIC IS UNABATED

REF: ACCRA 5042

1. SUMMARY: WHILE INDICATIONS ARE MIXED, PREPONDERANCE OF EVIDENCE TO DATE INDICATES GOG'S GESTURES OF JULY 1 SETTING DEADLINES ON ACTIONS LEADING TO CHANGE OF REGIME AND INCREASE IN MINIMUM WAGE (REFTEL) HAVE BROUGHT ACHEAMPONG SOME MORE TIME. THEY HAVE NOT, ON THE OTHER HAND, ASSUAGED BROAD DISSATISFACTION WITH REGIME, SOLVED ANY OF THE UNDERLYING PROBLEMS OR EVEN COMPLETELY PUT AN END TO PROFESSIONALS' STRIKE. END SUMMARY.

2. EXTENT OF PARTICIPATION IN STRIKE OF ASSOCIATION OF
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GHANAIAAN PROFESSIONALS STILL NOT ENTIRELY CLEAR AS THE NATURE OF SOME PROFESSIONS MAKES COMPLIANCE DIFFICULT TO JUDGE. HOWEVER, IT APPEARS THAT THE DOCTORS AND ENGINEERS' PARTICIPATION HAS BEEN LIMITED WITH SOMEWHAT MORE ACTIVITY ON PART OF LAWYERS, ACCOUNTANTS AND PHARMACISTS.

3. JULY 5 GOVT-OWNED DAILY GRAPHIC FEATURES STATEMENT BY

DR. G.I.T. GLOVERY, PRESIDENT MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, CALLING FOR CALM AND CONTINUATION OF MEDICAL SERVICES AND PROMISING A MEETING JULY 9 TO CONSIDER FURTHER ACTION. TIMES, ALSO GOVT-OWNED, CLAIMED ALL 200 DOCTORS AT ACCRA'S KORLE BU HOSPITAL WERE AT WORK AND THAT ENGINEERS AND ARCHITECTS WERE ON DUTY AT MAJOR UTILITY AND GOVERNMENT OFFICES. TIMES ADMITS HOWEVER THAT ACCRA LAWYERS MAINTAINED A COMPLETE ABSENCE FROM COURTS AND THAT SOME PHARMACIES IN CITIES AND HOSPITALS WERE CLOSED.

4. TWO HOUR ELECTRICAL FAILURE WHICH CUT ALL POWER THROUGH-OUT GHANA LATE AFTERNOON JULY 4 CAUSED CONCERN TO JITTERY GOG OFFICIALS AND SPARKED RUMORS THAT THOUGH BRIEF IT WAS WORK OF STRIKING ENGINEERS AND A WARNING OF MORE TO COME. OFFICIAL EXPLANATION HOWEVER WAS THAT IT WAS CAUSED BY A TECHNICAL FAULT IN TURBINE AT AKOSOMBO DAM AND UNRELATED TO POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS.

5. HEAD OF STATE ACHEAMPONG SUMMOND GOG OFFICIALS AND DIPLOMATS TO RELIGIOUS SERVICE TO END "NATIONAL WEEK OF MEDITATION AND REPENTANCE" AT CASTLE EVENING OF JULY 3. WHILE BILLED AS NON-DENOMINATIONAL, SERVICE WAS LED BY FLAMBOYANT EVANGELICAL MINISTER WHO PREACHED A (HINLY VEILED) POLITICAL APOLOGIA FOR GOG. RESPONSE FROM MANY GHANAIS (INCLUDING CATHOLIC AND ANGLICAN BISHOPS PRESENT) WAS CHILLY. ONE HIGH RANKING CIVIL SERVANT, ASKED WHY THIS EVANGELIST CONFIDENTIAL

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HAD BEEN TAPPED FOR THIS PROMINENT ROLE, REPLIED THAT THE MORE ESTABLISHED CLERGY HAD NOT BEEN AS COMPLIANT POLITICALLY.

6. EDITORIALS IN BOTH GOG DAILEYS JULY 5 HAVE SWITCHED REACTION TO STRIKE THREATS FROM INDIGNATION TO REASONABLENESS AND CALLS FOR DISCUSSION AND RECONCILIATION. BOTH CONGRATULATE DOCTORS FOR APPARENTLY THINKING BETTER OF STRIKE PLAN.

7. COMMENT: EFFECTIVENESS OF STRIKE OF PROFESSIONALS HAS BEEN LIMITED AT BEST. PARTICIPATION COULD STILL INCREASE BUT PRESENT INDICATIONS ARE IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO FORCE ANY IMMEDIATE CHANGE. ON OTHER HAND IT IS EVIDENT THAT DISSATISFACTION OF MANY SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY IS AS STRONG AS EVER. INCREASE IN MINIMUM WAGE HAS ALREADY BEEN REFLECTED IN MARKET PRICES MAKING IT PROMPTLY EVIDENT THAT NEW WAGE LEVELS WILL NOT BUY ANY MORE THAN THE OLD ONES. WHETHER THE ELECTRICITY OUTAGE WAS DUE TO PURELY MECHANICAL FAULTS OR NOT, IT IS BOUND TO INCREASE ANXIETY AND EXPECTATIONS OF MORE TO COME. ALTHOUGH ACHEAMPONG SHOULD BE PLEASED THAT HIS ACTIONS OVER THE WEEKEND APPEAR TO HAVE BROKEN THE UNITED FRONT OF THE

PROFESSIONALS, THE CONTINUING NERVOUSNESS AND ANXIETY
BEING REFLECTED BY SENIOR GOG OFFICIALS MAKE IT CLEAR
THAT THEY STILL REGARD THEMSELVES AS FACING A POLITICAL
CRISIS OF MAJOR PROPORTIONS.
SMITH

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